



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent and Trademark Office
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

SUGHRUE, MION, ZINN,
MACPEAK & SEAS, PLLC
2100 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON DC 20037-3213

COPY MAILED

FEB 19 2008

In re Application of :
Brewer :
Application No. 09/773,706 : DECISION
Filed: 2 February, 2001 :
Attorney Docket No. A7881 :
:

This is a decision on the petition filed on 12 January, 2007, considered as a request to withdraw the holding of abandonment under 37 C.F.R. §1.181, and, in the alternative, under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) to revive the application as abandoned due to unintentional delay.

The Office regrets the delay in addressing this matter, however, the instant petition was presented to the attorneys in the Office of Petitions only at this writing.

The petition as considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 is **DISMISSED** the petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **GRANTED**.

BACKGROUND

The record reflects that:

- Petitioner failed to reply timely and properly to the non-final Office action mailed on 6 May, 2005, (and addressing the non-responsive nature of a previously filed amendment), with reply due on or before 6 June, 2005;
- the application went abandoned after midnight 6 June, 2005;

- Petitioner filed, *inter alia*, a reply in the form of an amendment and terminal disclaimer with fee on 7 November, 2005;
- the Office mailed a Notice of Abandonment on 16 October, 2006;
- on 12 January, 2007, Petitioner filed, *inter alia*, the instant petitions, and averred timely filing of the reply (amendment and terminal disclaimer with fee) with an extension of time; and with the petition to revive (and fee) under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b), Petitioner submitted a reply (pointing back to the amendment and terminal disclaimer with fee) and made the statement of unintentional delay.

The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.181(f) indicate that “[a]ny petition under this part not filed within two months of the mailing date of the action or notice from which relief is requested may be dismissed as untimely, except as otherwise provided. This two-month period is not extendable.”

Notably, Petitioner’s contemporaneous filing of the petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) with that under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 appears to acknowledge or otherwise appreciate the failure to have filed timely (i.e., within two months of the act complained of (the Notice of Abandonment)), as set forth in 37 C.F.R. §1.181(f), the petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment.

The availability of applications and application papers online to applicants/practitioners who diligently associate their Customer Number with the respective application(s) now provides an applicant/practitioner on-demand information as to events/transactions in an application.

Out of an abundance of caution, Petitioners always are reminded that the filing of a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 does not toll any periods that may be running any action by the Office and a petition seeking relief under the regulation must be filed within two (2) months of the act complained of (see: 37 C.F.R. §1.181(f)), and that those registered to practice and all others who make representations before the Office are reminded to inquire into the underlying facts of representations made to the Office and support averments with the appropriate documentation—since all owe to the Office the continuing duty to disclose.¹

¹ See supplement of 17 June, 1999. The Patent and Trademark Office is relying on petitioner’s duty of candor and good faith and accepting a statement made by Petitioner. See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53160 and 53178, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 88 and 103 (responses to comments 64 and 109)(applicant obligated under 37 C.F.R. §10.18 to inquire into the underlying facts and circumstances when providing statements to the Patent and Trademark Office).

See specifically, the regulations at 37 C.F.R. §10.18.

STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).²

The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority.

The language of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) is clear, unambiguous, and without qualification: the delay in tendering the reply to the outstanding Office action, as well as filing the first petition seeking revival, must have been unavoidable for the reply now to be accepted on petition.⁴

Delays in responding properly raise the question whether delays are unavoidable.³ Where there is a question whether the delay was unavoidable, Petitioners must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unavoidable within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a).⁴

And the Petitioner must be diligent in attending to the matter.⁵ Failure to do so does not constitute the care required under Pratt, and so cannot satisfy the test for diligence and due care.

(By contrast, unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.⁶)

² 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:

35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.

Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

³ See: *Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice*, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53158-59 (October 10, 1997), 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 86-87 (October 21, 1997).

⁴ See: *In re Application of G*, 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pats. 1989).

⁵ See: *Diligence in Filing Petitions to Revive and Petitions to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment*, 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 33 (March 19, 1991). It was and is Petitioner's burden to exercise diligence in seeking either to have the holding of abandonment withdrawn or the application revived. See 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office supra.

⁶ Therefore, by example, an unintentional delay in the reply might occur if the reply and transmittal form are to be prepared for shipment by the US Postal Service, but other pressing matters distract one's attention and the mail is not timely deposited for shipment.

Allegations as to the Request to
Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment

The courts have determined the construct for properly supporting a petition seeking withdrawal of a holding of abandonment.⁷ (See, also, the commentary at MPEP §711.03(c)(I)(A) and (B).)

And the regulation requires that relief be sought within two (2) months of the act complained of.

As noted above, Petitioner appears to have failed to file timely under the regulation.

As to Allegations
of Unintentional Delay

The requirements for a grantable petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are the petition and fee, a proper reply, a statement/showing of unintentional delay, and—where appropriate—a terminal disclaimer and fee.

It appears that Petitioner has satisfied the regulatory requirements.

CONCLUSION

Petitioner appears to have failed to satisfy the burdens such that the petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment as considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 is dismissed; the petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is granted.

The instant application is released to Technology Center/AU 2616 for further processing in due course.

Petitioner may find it beneficial to view Private PAIR within a fortnight of the instant decision to ensure that the revival has been acknowledged by the Technology Center in response to this decision—and it is noted that all inquiries with regard to any failure of that change in status should be directed to the Technology Center/Art Unit where that change of status must be effected.

⁷ See: Delgar v. Schulyer, 172 USPQ 513 (D.D.C. 1971).

While telephone inquiries regarding this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3214, it is noted that all practice before the Office is in writing (see: 37 C.F.R. §1.2⁸) and the proper authority for action on any matter in this regard are the statutes (35 U.S.C.), regulations (37 C.F.R.) and the commentary on policy (MPEP). Therefore, no telephone discussion may be controlling or considered authority for Petitioner's action(s).



John J. Gillon, Jr.
Senior Attorney
Office of Petitions

⁸ The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.2 provide:

§1.2 Business to be transacted in writing.

All business with the Patent and Trademark Office should be transacted in writing. The personal attendance of applicants or their attorneys or agents at the Patent and Trademark Office is unnecessary. The action of the Patent and Trademark Office will be based exclusively on the written record in the Office. No attention will be paid to any alleged oral promise, stipulation, or understanding in relation to which there is disagreement or doubt.